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**Sent:** Wednesday, October 01, 2008 12:08 PM  
**To:** RAIL@LISTSERV.NTSB.GOV  
**Subject:** UPDATE: NTSB'S INVESTIGATION OF THE METROLINK, UNION PACIFIC ACCIDENT IN CALIFORNIA

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NTSB ADVISORY  
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National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

October 1, 2008  
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UPDATE: NTSB'S INVESTIGATION OF THE METROLINK, UNION PACIFIC ACCIDENT IN CALIFORNIA

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The following is an update of the NTSB's investigation of the September 12, 2008 accident in Chatsworth, California involving a Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train. As a result of the head-on collision, there were 25 fatalities and numerous injuries.

Information regarding the Metrolink engineer's cell phone activity on the day of the accident was obtained from his service provider under subpoena from the NTSB. As part of the ongoing investigation, this information is being used to determine the timing of cell phone activity, which includes text messaging to and from the engineer's cell number, in relation to the engineer's duty hours and train operations. Although the precise timing and correlation of these events is still underway at the Safety Board's Recorder Laboratory, preliminary information is being released regarding the approximate cell phone activity during the engineer's duty hours on the day of the accident.

On the day of the accident, the Metrolink engineer was on duty for two periods of time. The engineer was responsible for the operation of a train from 6:44 am until 8:53 am. During this period of time, the engineer's cell phone received 21 text messages and sent 24 text messages.

He was then off duty until 2:00 pm. The engineer was responsible for the operation of Metrolink train 111 from 3:03 pm until the time of the accident. During this time period, the engineer's cell phone received 7 text messages and sent 5 text messages. According to the time on the cell phone provider's records, the last text message received by the engineer's phone before the accident was at 4:21:03 pm, and the last text message sent from the engineer's cell phone was 4:22:01 pm.

A preliminary estimate for the time of the accident, according to the Union Pacific train's onboard recorders, is 4:22:23 pm. The Safety Board's Recorder Laboratory is continuing to correlate times recorded for use of the Metrolink engineer's cell phone, train recorder data, and signal system data to a common time base.

"I am pleased with the progress of this major investigation to date," Acting NTSB Chairman Mark V. Rosenker said today.

"We are continuing to pursue many avenues of inquiry to find what caused this accident and what can be done to prevent such a tragedy in the future."

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